

# The Cheerful Letter

Every place a church; every day the Lord's day; all events blessings; all joy thanksgiving; and all nature and life full of Good.—James Freeman Clarke.

Vol. XLVII

JANUARY, 1939

No. 7

## NEW YEAR'S DAY

Standing with folded wings of mystery,  
The New Year waits to greet us—you  
and me.

Her arms are full of gifts; her feet are  
shod  
All fitly for rough roads or velvet sod;  
Her eyes are steady with belief in God.

Her voice falls sweetly as a vesper bell  
Where trust and hope all lesser notes  
dispel;  
Scarce knowing why, we feel that all is  
well.

She smiles a little as she turns away,  
Breathing a promise for each coming  
day;  
And we—we pause a little while to pray.  
—LILLIAN GARD.

## GREEN PASTURES AND STILL WATERS

THE Twenty-third Psalm is a superlatively beautiful pastoral poem the setting and coloring of which are Oriental. The psalm maintains its metaphorical character throughout, and its concluding expression reaches a grand climax. Only a David could have written a poem like that. It is a strain of purest melody from the sweet singer of Israel. And then, too, David knew about sheep. But—more important than that—he knew about God; for was not he a man after God's own heart?

David had assurance that Jehovah, the great caretaker of all those who love Him supremely, was his shepherd, and would take care of him just as a shepherd on the hillsides of Canaan took care of his sheep. And it is evident that in

this wonderful psalm David was speaking prophetically as well, so that his words, in the highest sense, may be regarded as the expression of all God's people throughout the entire Gospel age to the present time.

The vicinity of Bethlehem is a pastoral country, and today is covered with flocks. It was the custom of the shepherds to remain with their flocks by night as a guard against thieves as well as against wild beasts. It was in this vicinity that David, when a shepherd protecting his flocks, slew on one occasion a lion, and at another time a bear. The shepherds as a class were not particularly well educated people as respects schools, and yet many of them were thoughtful and thus secured, in their leisure time while watching their flocks, by reflection and by conversation, considerable knowledge, so that they might be termed an intellectual and thinking class of people.

"I shall not want," exclaimed the poet of Israel. What he meant was that he should not come to actual want, but that the Lord would supply his needs. He knew the story of the long journeying of the Israelites through the Arabian desert, and how God had sent them manna, quails and water, and how their clothing had stood the wear and tear of travel; and so he felt assurance that God would always stand by His people. Jesus, the "Good Shepherd," set forth this doctrine very clearly, calling attention to the birds of the air, the grass of the field and the beauty of the lilies, and pointing out that if God can take care of such things in nature, He certainly can look after the interests of His people, as they journey through this world.

In order to claim the Lord as his shepherd, one must be sheeplike in disposition. It is pleasant to watch a flock of

Publication Office  
134 Summer Street, Boston, Mass.

Monthly, except August  
50 cents a year. Single copy, 5 cents

Bessie Dickerson Ducey, Editor  
159 Grandview Ave., Wollaston, Mass.

Check, post-office order, or stamps should be  
sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange  
25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Entered as second-class matter at the post office  
at Boston, Mass.

"Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of  
postage provided for in Section 1103, Act of  
October 3, 1917, authorized July 17, 1922."

sheep in pasture, for they are so peaceful. And they seem to indicate a sense of security in their shepherd. They know just where he is and they know his call. Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me." John 10:27. "A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers." John 10:5.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures," or, *margin*, "pastures of tender grass." We have seen sheep in poor pastures, and we pitied them. God keeps the pastures green and replete with the tender blades where His sheep are led. He sees to it that the food does not become stale. There are great breadths and lengths to the Word of truth.

"He leadeth me beside the still waters," or "the waters of quietness," *margin*. In some parts of Palestine there are drinking troughs and fountains where the sheep can drink in perfect safety. But when the sheep come to swiftly running water there is danger, for the sheep are very easily carried off their feet and may be drowned. Sometimes the shepherd dams up a place in a small stream and thus makes still water. Good drinking water is, of course, important for all animals, and this must be looked out for by the guardian of the flock.

And, likewise, God leads His own people beside the "waters of quietness." The world is full of swiftly flowing streams of one kind or another. People are carried away by one thing and another, by one theory after another, till,

eventually, many lose all faith in God and the glories He had promised for the future. Indeed, the entire world is setting far too swift a pace, and there is danger on every hand. But the Great Shepherd is taking care of His own sheep. The water of truth is cool and refreshing, and the sheep can drink to their heart's content.

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him," said Jesus, "it shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." John 4:14. There is nothing stagnant about such water. How easy it is to tell when people have been drinking of stagnant pools. The truth is kept sweet and good by the glorious hope that pervades it, and one never grows tired of a hope that is so real and that gives strength for the burden and toil of the day.

"He restoreth my soul." Sometimes a sheep will stray away. If it strays into someone else's land and the owner of the land finds it there, he may claim it. And, of course, a sheep is in great danger when alone, for it is a very defenseless animal. However, if the shepherd finds that a sheep is missing from the flock, he tries to find it, and frequently succeeds and restores it to the fold. This fact testifies to the great tender care over each and every one of them.

"He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." It means much to keep in the paths of righteousness. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God," said the apostle. Rom. 5:1. Then comes the righteousness of increased love. At first, our love for the Lord may be more of a duty love than anything more fervent, but in time we come to love God because of our appreciation of the fact that He is love. Then we learn to love those of like precious faith. Gradually our love extends till it reaches all people, even our enemies, so that we can pray for them, and have the desire to do them good.

"Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me; Thy rod

and Thy staff they comfort me." In Palestine, there are, in certain localities, holes in the earth where serpents lie in wait to bite the noses of the sheep. The shepherd must look out for these and drive the serpents away. Then sudden storms may arise, and the shepherd must calm the sheep and keep them together lest they become bewildered and scattered. And so it is in this world. One never knows how suddenly a storm may arise, and the wind and hail beat upon the heart, and at such times it is good to feel that our Shepherd is near at hand. His voice stills the storm in our hearts and drives away our fears. And we see that great staff of power in His hand, and know that He can use it against snakes or animals of the wild that would work us ill. "The rod and Thy staff, they comfort me."

"Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: Thou anointest my head with oil: my cup runneth over." So out there in the wilderness the faithful guardian of the flock prepares a table for the sheep, for He leads them in the green pastures and beside the still waters. And where are their enemies? Not far away, indeed. When David was keeping the flock he had to fight a lion and a bear. Then there are wolves, jackals and hyenas. The sheep could become terrified by a wolf getting in among them. In the event of this happening, it has been said that the shepherd mounts upon a rock, or stands on high ground where all the sheep can see him, and then makes a certain peculiar sound that all the sheep know. All at once, then, they rush to him, and the wolf is either crushed to death, or becomes fearful and is glad to escape.

And so today, likewise, we have the table prepared in the midst of our enemies. There is no excuse or reason for one going hungry or thirsty today. And while we feed in these green pastures, let us be thankful to the great Giver of it all.

"Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." When the sheep

come into this fold, the shepherd looks them over carefully, and if he finds one injured or very weary, he anoints it with the refreshing olive oil. And so the Great Shepherd applies to us the healing oil of the spirit of the truth, for what can help us like that when we are wounded in the Christian battle, or weary in heart with the toils of the way? And we think not only of ourselves but of others as well. "To give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness," said the Prophet Isaiah. Isa. 61:3. Thus, then in a way of speaking, we can help to pour out the oil upon the weary ones as well as receive it ourselves. "My cup runneth over" with joy when I meditate on all these wonderful things.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." A similar thought is set forth in Psalm 121, as follows: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: He that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: He shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore."

Yes, it is, indeed, reasonable to believe that if goodness and mercy have followed us in the past, they will continue to do so in the future. And throughout the past years, we can trace them all along the way. And then, when our journeying is over, when the many sorrows and cares of this life fade out as a dream, nevermore to return, ah, think of it, and preserve it as a pearl of purest joy in the treasure-chamber of your heart, we shall "dwell in the house of the Lord forever"! —*Selected.*

## CORRESPONDENCE AND APPEALS

MISS ETHEL H. STUDLEY, *Chairman*  
56 School Street, Hingham, Mass.

### HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR CORRESPONDENTS!

Fifty years ago a small group of women in Boston, Massachusetts, formed a small society "to bring a word of cheer and comfort to the lonely and sorrowful in every part of our country that we can reach." They called their society the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

When other women in other towns heard about the good work which was being done, they wanted to help, too; so new groups were formed; and for fifty years this society has been steadily growing, until today there are committees in twenty-two states, as far apart as Maine, Florida, and California, and two committees in Canada.

Now what does the name mean? We all know what is meant by cheer—a bright, happy, sunny feeling; we all know what a letter is—a little talk with our friends about our work and play, our thoughts and hopes and plans; and we all know what an exchange is—offering something we have in return for something someone else has. So letters written in the Cheerful Letter Exchange should be a happy passing back and forth of friendly greetings between people in different sections of our country. They should tell interesting facts about our families, our schools, our church life, our work, the books we read, the kind of country in which we live, the interesting things our children say and do, the things with which we entertain ourselves whether we are alone or whether we have a large family gathered together on a Sunday afternoon or a stormy evening. Do we ever read books aloud to our families? Do we like to sing? What kind of pictures do we like to see on our walls? Have we some pretty plants in our windows or in the garden? Let's tell about all these things.

Perhaps there are interesting little articles in our local newspapers or some

pictures of people or scenes in our own town, that others may like to share. We all want to make our letters so interesting that our friends will be looking forward to seeing the mailman come, or going to the mail-box.

Of course, sickness and trouble come to us all, no matter where we live or what we do; but this hour of letter-writing should drive all sad, disagreeable thoughts from our minds so that we may remember all the happy little things we want to tell our friends. For so we may all spread cheer.

Now the Cheerful Letter Exchange asks everyone who cares for letter-writing of this kind to join us. If you are already a member, but find that you do not care to keep up your side of the correspondence, will you not let us know, so that someone else may have your place on the list?

In order that we may feel very well acquainted with each of you, we need to know the names and ages of all members of the family—father, mother, brothers and sisters, if you are not married; and husband and children if you are married. So if you have not yet sent in this list to the chairman, Miss Ethel H. Studley, please do so at once. And do not send letters asking for correspondence or appeals to anyone except the chairman, as all such letters have to be forwarded to her, and the extra work means a waste of time and postage.

As we have said, this Exchange is interested in people who want to write letters. It does not give money to public or private charity, nor send clothing, however much it may be needed. Such requests should be sent to whatever charitable society is nearest you. So please do not ask for things which we shall be obliged to refuse. However, we shall do our best to answer appeals for quilt and rug material, used post cards or picture cards, and reading matter.

Please say very clearly what you want; and do not ask for a correspondent unless you intend to follow our wishes about letter-writing. You must always be sure to sign your own name to your letter. If, at the time, you are unable to do so, the person who signs for you should sign her full name below yours. Any other way is not acceptable.

Does anyone want to study at home? We shall be very glad to find a teacher. One of our members would like a German correspondent; one would like to teach Braille to a blind person; many would like to help in letter-writing or short stories, and there are many aids to spelling.

We hope that all who have already applied will soon be adopted by one of our members; and during this new year, let us all remember the meaning of the words, *Cheerful Letter Exchange*.

#### TO COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

The new year finds us with too long a list of names waiting to be adopted into our membership. Consequently, we have not printed any new requests in this issue. As usual, names may be obtained from the chairman of this Department. If any *Cheerful Letter* chairman failed last May to report her list of correspondents and rural schools, will she please send the lists at her earliest opportunity to Miss Ethel H. Studley, 56 School Street, Hingham, Mass.

Happy New Year to all Chairmen!

#### THE LOOK AHEAD

I am done with the years that were; I am quits;  
I am done with the dead and old.  
They are mines worked out; I delved in their pits;  
I have saved their grain of gold.

Now I turn to the future for wine and bread;

I have bidden the past adieu.

I laugh, and lift hands to the years ahead  
"Come on! I am ready for you!"

EDWIN MARKHAM

#### HOW TO ATTRACT THE BIRDS

BECAUSE birds are so useful to us, as well as because they are so interesting and so beautiful, it is delightful to have them come about our homes. And it is not at all difficult, for they are easily taught to like us.

In countries where people are gentle, and try to make birds happy, . . . they become very tame, writes Olive T. Miller, in "*The Children's Book of Birds*." Mr. Hearn, who has written about Japan, says that the fearlessness of wild creatures is one of the most charming things about the remote parts of Japan. . . .

Travelers who visit Norway tell us that birds are never disturbed there, and they come freely about the houses. When it is very cold, they even come into the houses for food and warmth, and no one thinks of frightening them or trying to catch them.

Even in our own country, Dr. Ridgway told me of a bird-lover in Florida who would not let birds be annoyed on his place. As a result, he had a great many there, and they became very tame. Cardinal grosbeaks, which are rather shy, were so tame they would take food from his hand.

A person living in the country, wishing to draw the birds about his place, should begin by protecting it. . . . Next, trees and shrubs that birds like, for nesting and for food, should be set out. For nesting, a very attractive place for the smaller species is a thick hedge of bushes, the thicker and closer the better.

Nesting-boxes nailed up in trees please many, and evergreen trees will draw some that would not come otherwise. For food, various berry-bearing shrubs and trees should be provided, such as chokeberry, shadberry, mulberry, and others.

In a town or city, besides shrubs that birds like, a high fence, with a top that cats cannot walk on, is desirable, and a readiness to go to their assistance is soon appreciated. . . .

The one great necessity, in both city and country, is water for drinking and

bathing. It should be in a shallow dish. The rough saucer of a flower pot is best, because the bird's feet do not slip on it, and the edge is broad and round and easy to perch on.

Next best is an earthen dish, with clean pebbles in the bottom, to prevent slipping, which frightens them. Water should never be more than two inches deep, but should always be clean, and fresh two or three times a day. . . .

In the winter, they should have food regularly. . . . On the sill of a window is a good place to feed them, or the roof of a piazza, or a little balcony. Breakfast should be served to them at the same hour every day, and they will soon know when to come for it.

For food, they will eat any table scraps of meat and vegetables and bread, chopped fine, and most kinds of grain, broken up or crushed for the smaller birds.

But the thing that they all like best of everything is raw suet, as it comes from the butcher. A large piece may be wired or nailed in place, so that it may be picked at and not displaced, or it may be chopped fine and scattered on the shelf, like other food. All birds are fond of this.

In winter, they need water, and it should then, also, be fresh.

A lady living in southern Ohio, who has for several years given a breakfast to the birds every day in winter, told me that her daily guests last season were hairy and downy woodpeckers, nut-hatches, white and red-breasted, one young kinglet, a pair of chickadees, tufted titmice, blue jays, juncos, cardinal grosbeaks, Carolina wrens and sparrows.

This delightful company came regularly for breakfast, and to pay her sang nearly through the season.

—*Christian Science Monitor.*

## INDOOR WINDOW GARDENS

HOME gardeners who enjoy the experience of growing plants are well equipped to follow the modern fashion of indoor gardening.

A great variety of flowers may be forced into bloom indoors with little trouble. Arranged on shelves, or in a window box near a sunny window, they will keep fresh throughout the Winter the memory of Summer days.

Experience in growing flowers indoors is of value in outdoor operations, too. The gardener sees at close hand the progress of the plants, and learns how gratefully they respond to intelligent care.

The easiest plants to grow indoors are the bulbs, both the hardy kinds, which are grown in gardens, and tender varieties which will not stand our Winters, but grow vigorously indoors.

Some of them need potting in soil, others can be grown in bowls with fiber, moss, or even pebbles and water. Select them according to the experience you have had, and the attention you are willing to give them. It is easiest to grow those which flower in pebbles and water, but more interesting, and a better test of your gardening skill, to bring into flowers those which require soil.

All bulbs can be grown in soil, a smaller number in fiber, and still fewer in water with pebbles, or moss. To begin with the latter, they include the tender narcissi known as Paper Whites (white), Soliel d'Or (yellow), and Chinese sacred lilies; the largest size hyacinths, and lilies of the valley.

In bulb fiber, which is a mixture of peat and plant food, it is possible to grow in bowls without drainage all the above, together with daffodils, early tulips, crocuses, freesias, calla lilies, grape hyacinths and scillas.

In pots with soil all the above can be grown, together with all garden tulips and narcissi, amaryllis, Roman hyacinths, and by the more skillful, lilies.

From this list one may select a pleasing assortment of colors and shapes, to decorate the Winter garden. By starting bulbs in succession, a bowl or pot may be replaced as soon as its flowers fade and a continuous display maintained throughout the season.

—*Selected.*

## NEW YEAR WISH

I shall not wish for you a store of gold,  
In this new year, for wealth takes  
fleeting wing;

But I shall pray, that you may ne'er  
grow old

In spirit; that your heart may always  
sing!

I shall not wish for you a life of ease,  
For labor can give character and  
grace;

But I shall wish that you may Fortune  
please

And win in marts of trade, an honored  
place!

I shall not wish for you a life all joy,  
For every human soul some grief must  
know;

There is no perfect bliss without alloy,  
May you meet sorrow bravely, as you  
go!

I shall not wish, "A Happy New Year,  
Friend";

I say instead: Be gallant to the end!

—AGNES CARR.

## TREE TROUBLE

I DON'T KNOW what has come over the trees up around my place, but certainly they lack the rugged self-reliance of their ancestors who lived in the forests and fought it out. The tree doctor has been discovering alarming symptoms in some of them. He thinks the little maples should be wrapped in burlap spirals, something like a colic band, and he says they haven't been getting the right kind of food. Too acid, and the result is malnutrition and a rash on the bark. So he wants to change the formula to something milder and keep a sort of clinical chart on them next summer to see how they do.

The willows are all right now; but they had the borer two years ago and nearly died. The diagnostician caught it in time and brought in the surgeon, who operated at once. The bark has almost closed over

the wounds now and the danger seems past, although we are still advised to paint the scars with antiseptic every so often. It keeps out infection.

The only tragedy on the place since the two black cherries were suddenly stricken, and died in spite of all that science could do, is the big swamp maple. This is a stout old tree which has been failing for two years. There has been a little pile of sawdust on the ground near the trunk, and this indicates the borers again. We suggested feeding it some strong, wholesome tree food and, though we dreaded the thought of an operation, we were willing to chance even that if it could do any good.

"No," the doctor said, "I am afraid it is hopeless. This is an old tree and its day is just about done. All you can do is to make it comfortable these last few years of its life. We can trim it a little and give it some sedative, but that is about all."

The agricultural trucks are up and down the roads all the time, and the tree nurses—young men in high lace boots and corduroys—go through the groves taking temperatures, examining the bark and condemning hopeless trees to destruction.

Such eczemas and tumors, digestive troubles, respiratory troubles and infections as attack trees these days turn joy to tragedy in the country. We sat up three months, so to speak, with the two black cherries, and they died in our arms, although in the days before the city people went up into the country, nothing bothered them. They had roughed it successfully for thirty years in neighborly competition with the oaks and pines and beeches. Then suddenly they caught cold and were gone, for all the specialists could do.

But those trees—they are a case. I never would have thought that trees would get so highstrung.

—WESTBROOK PEGLER  
from *Reader's Digest*.

The future always holds something for the man who keeps faith in it.

### "THE NEW LEAF"

"He came to my desk with quivering lip—

The lesson was done.

'Dear Teacher, I want a new leaf,' he said,

'I have spoiled this one.'

I took the old leaf, stained and blotted,  
And gave him a new one all unspotted,

And into his sad eyes smiled,

'Do better, now, my child.'

"I went to the throne with a quivering soul—

The old year was done.

'Dear Father, hast Thou a new leaf for me?

I have spoiled this one.'

He took the old leaf, stained and blotted,  
And gave me a new one all unspotted,

And into my sad heart smiled,

'Do better, now, my child.'

KATHLEEN WHEELER

### ROUMANIAN JOURNEY

IT was misty on the morning that we left Sinaia by car. Spring comes late to these Carpathian heights, and the early hours were still chilly. The mountain clouds lay low, like a pearly veil over the towering peaks, in the great solitudes where the golden eagle hovers and the lynx and wild cat still make their homes.

Lower down the mist lay densely over the forests, cutting the tops of the giant pines so that they looked weird, their green crowns dis severed from the boles. The raindrops of an over-night shower brightened the somber, outflung branches of the trees, and the wetness brought out the pungent odor of these forest monarchs. We could hear the plashing of a mountain stream, cascading over a rocky outcrop; but the mist hid the stream from view, and deadened the sound of its waters. These Carpathian mountains hold a great stillness within their arms.

The road wound ahead, glistening somberly under the rain: it led us through the great forests, it twisted

sharply to right or left. A flash of white walls, the wet thatched roofs, heavy, overhanging, of a peasant homestead; we had left the last houses of Sinaia behind us, and were in the shelter of the great trees.

The pines stretched away on either hand, seemingly to an immeasurable distance: mysterious, dim and green, their tall boles a reddish brown, darkened by the mist. The wild life of the mountains and the forests lies away from the roads: only in winter, when the snow lies thickly, do these creatures of the solitudes lose their fear of man and come closer to the highway.

There was a fragrance in the air as the car swept round the sharp gradients of the route: the scent of wet pine needles, delicious, aromatic. The feel of the wet, misty air against one's face was pleasant. The bare boles of the pines soared up into the clouds; now and then, as the floating wreaths of vapor cleared away, one saw a towering peak sharply outlined against a sky that showed blue behind the mist.

As the car sped on and noon came, there was a sound of wind in the trees, a west wind that meant rain, though the morning mists were gradually disappearing. There was the sound, too, of tumbling water. We crossed a mountain stream by a wooden bridge, saw the ferns and mosses of its banks sparkling under the fugitive rays of the sun. From a clearing in the forest, a heavy cart drawn by two dun-colored oxen creaked into view: its driver, a peasant boy, startlingly handsome as so many of these Roumanian people are, with brown eyes and classical features, a wide sombrero on his black hair.

Now the road plunged suddenly downwards. The mists, which had gathered again, cleared for an instant; and far below, spread out like a map, we saw the fertile plains, looking so close beneath the sheer drop of the mountain slopes that it was difficult to believe that many hours' driving still separated us from our destination.

Then the clouds fell again: the smoke wreaths of mist covered the vista, and

once more we plunged into the dim gloom of the forests. It seemed a strange isolation: we drove on in silence, the landmarks of the plains had vanished; we were cut off from all else save the trees, even the mountain peaks were now behind us, although our way still led down their sides.

The vistas of red boles seemed illimitable: the wind bending the tree-tops was lashed with raindrops but no rain reached us through their sheltering lattice; the denseness of their dark green crowns was our protection from the storm which had blown up.

The road seemed to be winding backwards on itself, so far afield did it take us, as the gradients grew even steeper. The surface of the road was treacherous now, after the rain, and we must go cautiously.

We stopped by the side of the road to eat our luncheon. The silence was absolute. We had met no cars: saving the peasant boy with his team of oxen, the road had been completely deserted. The world seemed empty of all but ourselves. We started again, the car leaping and bounding down the slopes as if it felt a need for speed and the conclusion of its journey.

The promise of noon had not been fulfilled, and the light was still tremulous and uncertain. A group of woodcutters, thinning a gap on the mountain-side, looked like ghosts, the clear ringing of their axes somehow dissociated from their persons as these moved silently about their task.

The kilometers flashed past: now we came to a little white town, its gardens showing the spring flowers which the greater heights could not yet enjoy. The long cobbled streets were deserted under the rain which fell heavily out in the open. At a window a patch of color showed a peasant woman, her embroidered bodice and kerchiefed head making a vivid contrast to the dark background of her curtain. The black gaberdine of a Jewish pedlar trailed through the mud of the market-place, where the oxen had trodden the path into puddles; a flock of geese, driven by a barefooted boy, scat-

tered shrilly before our wheels; and an old gander bravely threatened us with outspread wings and indignant protest.

And then the forest again, but the giant peaks were left far behind us. There was a new feeling in the air. The light changed: we left the heavy overhanging clouds in the distance, and it was sunny in the late afternoon.

Now the mountain-sides dropped sheer away from the road as it wound round its lower slopes. It seemed as if we could almost touch the tops of the mighty pines along the cuttings. The last railing, swirling shreds of mist dispersed; we discovered the rolling plains again, but nearer now. We had crossed and recrossed the river many times during that day; but it wound more slowly as we came from the heights, and there were green meadows, and brown and white oxen at work upon the fields: we were in the plains at last.

At every turn of the road, as evening drew on, we heard the jangle of the cow bells, for the barefoot children were taking their charges home. There was a warmer, softer air; we had left the wilderness and the solitary places behind us and were in the rich and fertile heart of Roumania.

Soon we were approaching the town which was our destination for that night, and in the gathering darkness its lights shone out with welcome.

Then the car was rolling over the cobbled street, long and winding with long, low white houses on either hand. In the square market-place was our inn: lights shining from its windows and wooden balconies overhanging the lower story. As we sat at supper in our room overlooking the little market-place, watching the stars, which shone brightly from a clear sky, for the rain was spent, we felt the luxury of shelter and remembered the somber loneliness of the pines, the chill of the towering peaks of the Carpathians.

—*Christian Science Monitor.*

How do some manage to do so much? The answer is simple: It is because they do everything promptly.

## WITH OUR BOYS AND GIRLS

## RED EARS

ETHEL MARY BAKER

ROGER was husking corn in the five-acre field back of the barn. He tossed the golden ears in the basket rather slowly, for it was less fun to husk corn for Dad than for Mr. Lawson who paid him five cents for every bushel. But Dad had told him that if he wanted to work out on Saturdays, he must husk that field of seed corn between times. For Mr. Allen believed that boys should learn the real value of work and money, and not be paid for everything they did.

That field of corn was supposed to be a yellow strain, but somehow a red ear was now and then mixed in. Perhaps Mr. Allen had noticed how slowly the work was going, for one day he said:

"Son, I'll pay you a nickel for every red ear you find, provided you place them in a pile by themselves."

Roger started in with enthusiasm. Red ears were rather scarce, but they accumulated, and as the pile grew, he found himself wishing that something could be done with those pretty ears.

The following Saturday when he was working for their neighbor, Mr. Lawson, Roger told him about the red ears. He was interested at once.

"When I was down in New Mexico," he said, "I saw the squaws braiding squaw corn in great long strings. I suppose a string would bring in good money now, especially to these rich antique-collecting people."

"But what do they use it for?" asked Roger.

"Oh, they'd find plenty of uses for it. They could use it on their porches, hang it in their hallways, decorations for winter parties and so on. Wish I could remember just how the squaws did it, but at the time I did not pay much attention. However, they made the ears hang down in clusters that were very attractive."

One evening soon after, the Reverend and Mrs. Brown called at the Allen home. During the evening Mrs. Allen and Mrs.

Brown were discussing Mrs. Mounder, an old lady who lived alone in the village.

"She acts so queerly when I call on her," said Mrs. Brown, "and I can't get a thing out of her, but I don't believe that she has enough to eat!"

"If she was able to do some work, perhaps we could help her find some—that is, if she'd want it," suggested Mrs. Allen.

"I think she would, all right," replied Mrs. Brown, "for she did say that she would like to find something to do to keep her mind occupied. But I thought then, as I do now, that it was her coal bin she wanted filled as well as to occupy her mind. And you know how plentiful work is in our town for an old lady like her! I did hear that she used to be a missionary among the Indians out West somewhere, years back, but I can't find out a thing. When I mention the subject, she shuts up like a clam."

Roger, who was reading, pricked up his ears. He knew Mrs. Mounder and liked her, and if she worked among the Indians, she might know how to braid corn! He would ask her.

So the next afternoon on his way from school, he went by her little house. He found her picking up chips in her tiny back yard. After he had helped her and they had started the fire, he broached the subject of the corn. The old lady's face brightened.

"Why, of course I know how to braid corn! Many is the time I've helped a squaw with her string."

"And you'll show me so that I can surprise Mother with a string?" questioned Roger eagerly.

"Of course," replied Mrs. Mounder. "But listen! you bring me some nice ears with the shucks peeled back, in all the shades of red, white, yellow and speckled that you can find, and I'll fix up a string for you."

"But will you have time?"

The old lady laughed bitterly. "Too much! Nothing to do but sit here from morning till night!"

That night the delighted boy told his father about his plans and asked him for the corn.

"You may have the corn," said Mr. Allen, "but you must think of some way to pay her for the work."

Roger thought hard for some minutes, then his face brightened. "I'll tell you what, Dad, I don't think she had a thing to burn except chips last night. May I pick up a load of wood off the creek flats and take it to her?"

"That will be fine," agreed Mr. Allen, "and I'll help you cut it up with the buz saw."

Mrs. Allen was very much surprised and pleased with the string of corn that her husband nailed on the porch a week later. "It looked so festive!" she exclaimed. "Why, we country folks can have all the decorations of the city and not go off our own place to get them! Roger, I'm proud of you!"

*(To be concluded)*

### SAVED BY HER QUEUE

By HARRIETTE WILBURR PORTER

A MAN may own a piece of country property just to have a place to play on during the summer, and yet find some of the circumstances in connection therewith decidedly vexing. So the owner of "Tam O' Shanter," within view of Mr. Kearsarge in New Hampshire, found that his newly purchased old abandoned farm had its temper-trying little difficulties.

One of his proud dreams had been a garden, where fresh beets, lettuce, onions, and all such delectable food-stuffs would be only a few steps from the kitchen table. He had hired a neighbor to plow the allotted area and sow the many packages of seeds he had sent, and had his mouth made up for all sorts of fresh vegetables that summer.

And the garden was doing well early in the season. Then Mr. Ferguson discovered that all too frequently a plant here and there was languishing and dying, or missing altogether. Also that strange diggings were honeycombing the garden.

"It's a woodchuck's work," said his neighbor. "You'll have to lay for it and shoot it, or your garden's a goner."

Mr. Ferguson vowed he couldn't be shooting things. But when each morning fresh depredations appeared in his vegetable garden, he became vexed enough to take measures.

A woodchuck had been spied several times galloping into a pile of stones that bridged a creek between the barn and the upland hayfield. It was decided that this furtive groundhog was the guilty creature. Its burrow was located, and Mr. Ferguson sat down within range of it under an apple tree, rifle ready.

His vigil continued some time. Indeed, he was about to busy himself with something else when he saw the woodchuck's head peering out of the rocks.

"No fair shooting now," he thought. "I'll give it a run for its life."

So he waited for the whole animal to emerge from the den and be on its way.

"I'll shoot when I see it headed definitely for the garden," he vowed, remembering the big crater in the middle of his white turnips.

The woodchuck spent plenty of time gazing about the world from its doorway before venturing forth. When it did come out it was deliberate enough. And instead of scampering for the garden, as Mr. Ferguson expected it to do, it was in no hurry to get on its way.

Suddenly he observed a small, dark shadow in the same opening in the rocks. As he watched, out crept an infant edition of the first woodchuck.

"Young ones to forage for!" That made Mr. Ferguson less vindictive over the loss of his luscious young beets.

The piggie got clear of the doorway and scampered over by its mother. Still she didn't move on. Mr. Ferguson was still nursing his wrath by remembering his juicy new lettuce leaves all ragged and trampled, when he saw a second small head in the doorway of the den.

The mother had started slowly away along the soft creek bank, not toward the garden but in the opposite direction. The first woodchuckling waddled after,

close at her heels. Out tumbled the second one and raced after the procession. Another one appeared in the doorway and came out so fast that he seemed to have been forcibly ejected by the fourth little woodchuck which was followed by three more in quick succession.

"They looked like little gondola cars coming out of a mine," laughed Mr. Ferguson. "And as they hurried over to hook themselves on behind the mother, they made a perfect little train of cars traveling along the creek bank, with the mother for the engine."

"She took her time and didn't try to hurry the youngsters. They took their time, too, and kept their place in line as though they were attached one to the other by invisible coupling pins.

"Pad, pad, pad, they went, trudging over the grass in regular, sedate order as though they were being pulled along a

track. I never saw a droller sight, or a better demonstration of maternal training and oversight. She seemed to pay no attention to her queue of seven, but padded slowly along as if sure each woodchuckling of her litter knew how to tag and would tag in a well-behaved manner.

"Where were they going? I haven't the slightest idea, although it appeared to be some important outing for the whole family. The last I saw of them the very tail-ender in the queue was gliding out of sight around a dogwood bush.

"Yes, I saw the family often after that. You see, they waxed fat and strong and saucy that summer, with my garden to feed on. . . . Oh, whenever we needed fresh vegetables we bought them of the neighbors."

—*The Beacon.*

## THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE

MISS ANNA E. SIBLEY, *Chairman*, 82 Browne Street, Brookline, Mass.

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Meetings at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at 10.30 A.M. the first Friday of each month from October to May inclusive.

### ITS PURPOSE

To cheer and comfort those who are ill, lonely, or discouraged, and to give to those living far from a church some of the inspiration of the printed word by the publication of one good sermon, or similar article in each issue of the *Cheerful Letter Magazine*. Only such simple religious truths and principles as are agreed upon by all churches are printed.

To help those who live far from schools, or who wish to continue their studies by means of correspondence with a teacher.

To establish Circulating Libraries in isolated communities, schools, and colleges in rural and mountain districts where public libraries and other educational privileges are not available.

### WHERE TO WRITE

*Letters containing subscriptions to the paper*, fifty cents a year, and *money from the Sunshine Bags* should be sent to the Cheerful Letter Exchange, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Checks or postal orders should be made payable to the Cheerful Letter Exchange.

*Letters asking for correspondents and appeals to be printed in the Cheerful Letter Magazine*, also *letters asking for help in studying at home* should be sent to Miss Ethel H. Studley, 56 School Street, Hingham, Mass. Anyone, young or old, who is unable to continue work at an educational center may become a correspondent.

*Letters about the establishment of Circulating Libraries* should be sent to Mrs. Neal D. Randall, *Chairman*, 12 Stearns Street, Westwood, Mass. A Circulating Library will be started in any small community that is in need of one, if proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references given.

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